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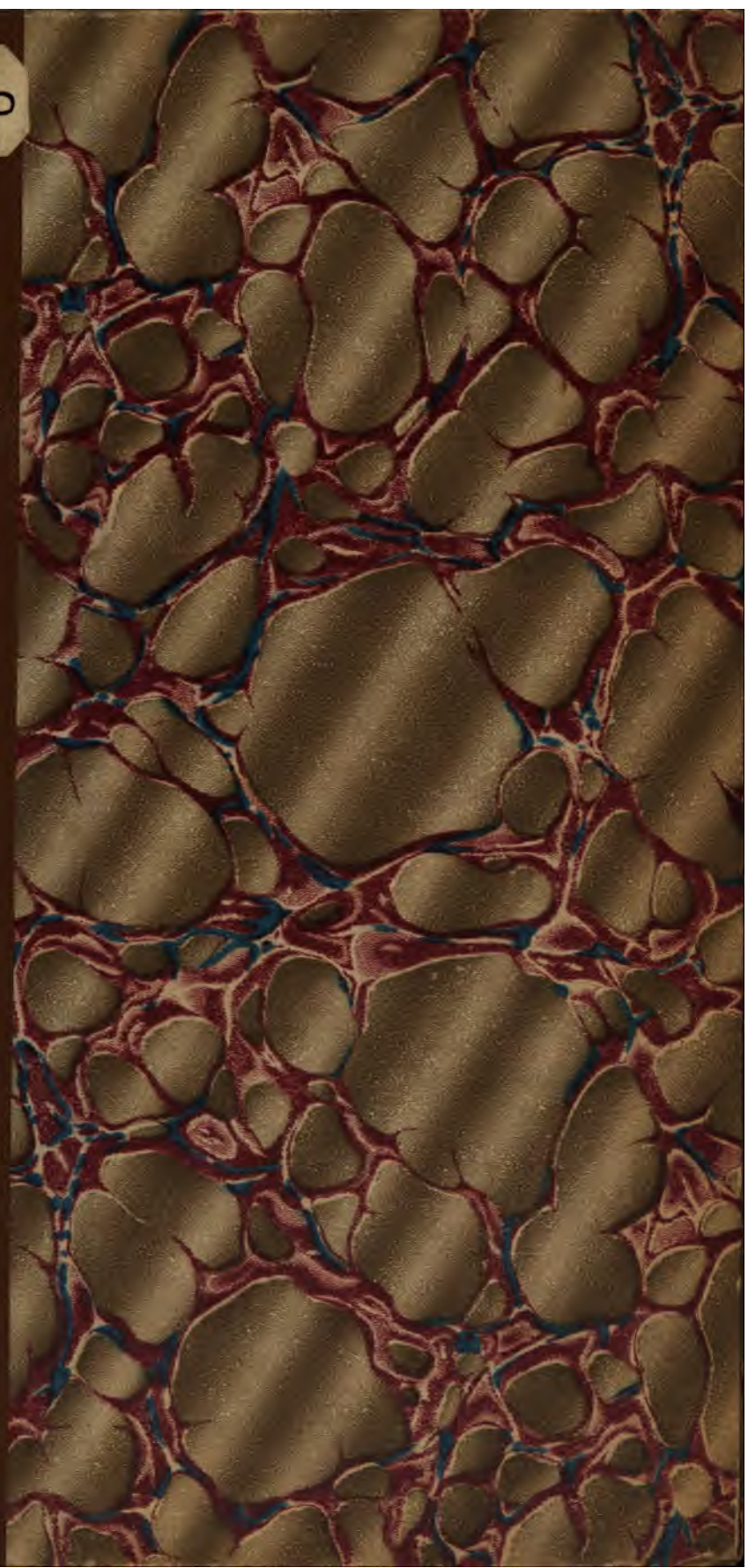
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Grafton - Search of the Sea Serpent, 1891

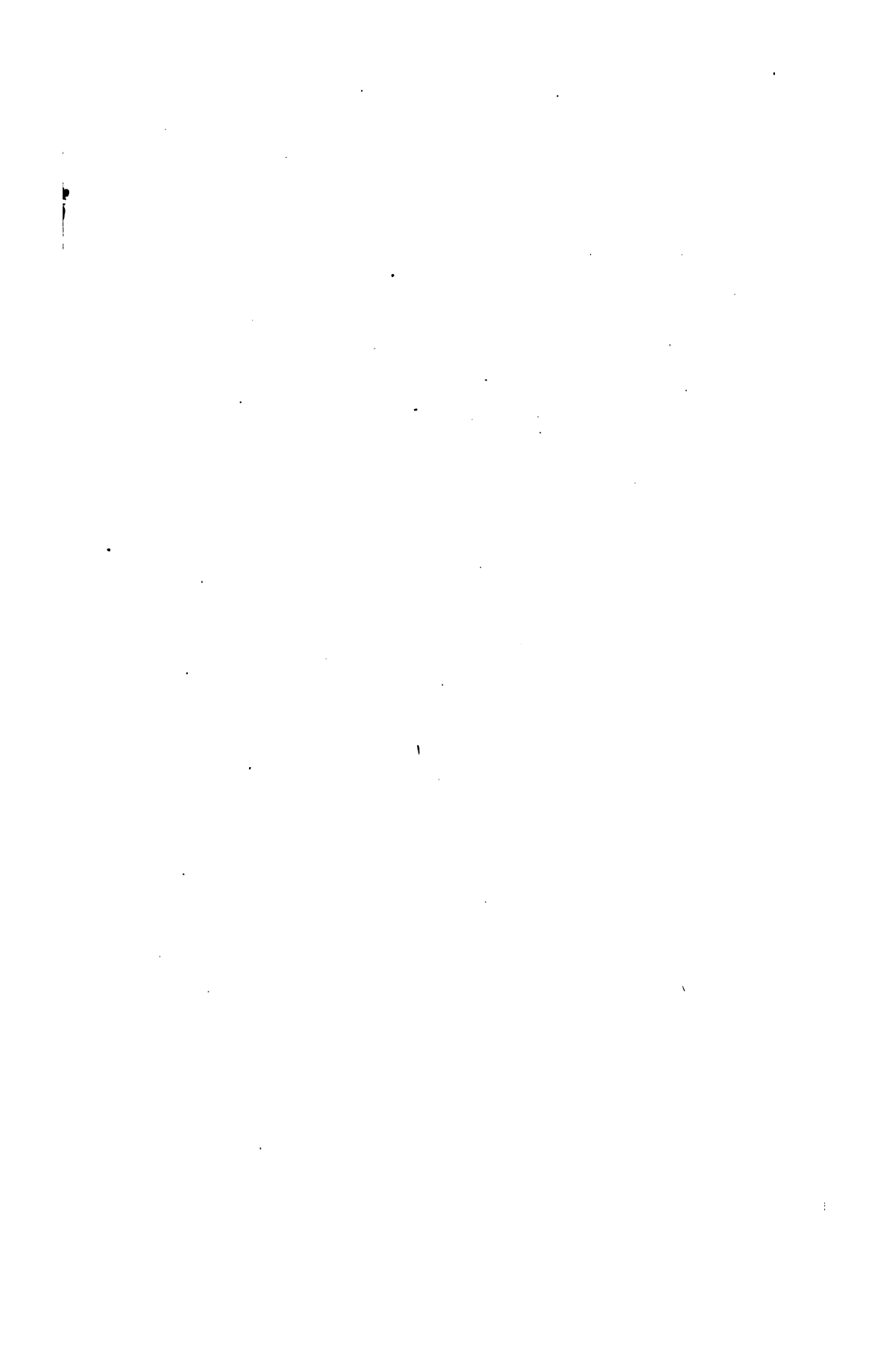


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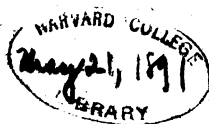
A REALISTIC STORY.

Groton, January 26, 1891.



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Gratie

INTRODUCTION.

We beg leave to state to our readers, that in undertaking to write a realistic story confined as we were for characters to the members of the Club for the year 1890, we were confronted at once with this difficulty, we had no shadows or even semi-tones in our picture. Every member of the Club is so perfect in character that we have been obliged to invent or draw upon our fancy for all characteristics not ideal.

We therefore desire to say, that we have been obliged to depart slightly from the truly realistic novel. If anyone by chance thinks himself or herself alluded to in these pages, and is surprised at any unworthy characteristics being depicted, we give our assurance that all undesirable qualities are only the fiction of our imaginations, while all desirable and good qualities are photographic, so true are they to nature as displayed before us.

CHAPTER I.

Groton was never in such a fever of excitement as it was the day that it was publicly known that a party was to be organized from its own citizens to search for the sea serpent. It was strange too, that so much interest should have been felt, because the town was such a live, active community, that remarkable events were taking place in its midst all the time, and a search for the sea serpent or anything else was not such an unusual event as would lead you to expect that it would cause even a ripple of excitement.

If one could judge from the landscape anything of the character of a place, you would suppose that Groton would be simply a quiet New England village. It is situated in the midst of an amphitheatre of beautiful hills. At sunrise and sunset these hills are bathed in a golden or more often in a purple light, which rivals anything which can be seen in Italy. Its winding roads with their beautiful curves, are finer than those which an Olmstead can plan. And for those who delight in wood and water scenery, nothing can surpass in beauty the succession of lakes in the midst of the unbroken forest, which lie to the east of the village.

These surroundings would be expected to foster a quiet spirit, but instead all the people of Groton are possessed with such a restless energy that many events of great moment are happening every day. What is still more remarkable, is that ever since the settlement of the town, it has an unbroken record of wonderful events occurring in its midst.

Within the first century of the town's existence, the Indians visited here several times. These Indian visits were always of so great interest to the people, that the excitement would begin to show weeks and even months before they actually arrived, and the effects of these visitations would often last years. On one occasion large bonfires were made of the houses as there was no other dry wood in the place.

In the next hundred years, the town was visited by the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria, and by witches, which were said to be first cousins of the Salem witches. Surely excitement enough one would think for any hundred years. During this last century, which has still ten years more of life, and what wonders may not happen in ten years, so many remarkable things have happened that time and space are insufficient to mention them at all. But I should be recreant to the trust imposed upon me, if I omitted to state that the event of this century, so far as can be judged by an impartial contemporaneous historian, was the formation of the Groton Literary Club.

This Club had been in existence nine years, when it was thought best to signal its entrance upon its tenth year of life by some unusual expedition. It was finally decided to plan an excursion which would not only give pleasure to the members of the Club, but would also add important scientific knowledge to the world. Among the many scientific discoveries which would be of real benefit to the world, such as the finding of the North Pole, the adaptation of electricity to all forms of locomotion especially to that of walking, or the discovery of a simple method of measuring the purity of air, as we now measure its temperature. *all* were agreed that nothing could be of such prominent advantage to mankind as the discovery of the sea serpent. At once it was seen that in an expedition of such transcendent importance, the utmost care and skill must be given to its organization. Accordingly a committee of skilled persons were selected from the Club to plan the ex-

pedition, even to its minutest details. Of course every member of the Club was anxious to have part, but as only a few could be selected who should be able to walk in this path of glory, it was decided to take those who from previous training seemed best fitted to make the expedition a success. As the committee were desirous that no favoritism should be shown, an opportunity was given to each member to state his or her fitness for the duties.

The first to offer her services was Lucille. In personal appearance she looked like a wild rose, but she stated that her power of endurance was something phenomenal. That she had never known what it was to be tired. That moreover she had travelled extensively in Europe and America, and from such large experience in all parts of the globe, she felt that she was eminently qualified not only to be a member of the band, but she thought it entitled her to be a leader of the expedition.

When asked if in her wanderings she had ever seen the sea serpent, she confessed that she had not. It seemed to some members of the committee that if she had already had such large opportunities for making the acquaintance of the sea serpent, and had not even seen him, she showed conclusively her unfitness for the task, otherwise in some of her perigrinations, she would already have found him. It seemed therefore desirable to trust to some one who had had no chances and no failures.

After Lucille, came Mr. Aulick. He said, that he would try and summarize the reasons why he should be a member of the expedition, though to his mind it was a waste of time as they must be patent to everybody. He would say that he was born in The Hawaiian Islands. He stated for the benefit of those who were ignorant of the fact, and he presumed that all those who were listening to him, belonged to such ignorant class, that since the U. S. Government through a commission, had given the true geographical nomenclature to all places, the old name Hawaiian Islands had been substituted for that of the Sandwich Islands.

He also impressed upon the committee the immense advantage it gave him over all others belonging to the Club, in that he had known thoroughly the ways, customs and habits of the cannibals. As he understood matters a cannibal and a sea serpent were very much alike, as they each devoured man.

Now, from his known dexterity in escaping from the can-

nibals, and no one who was so fortunate as to gaze upon him would doubt that he had escaped, he felt sure that if he should see the sea serpent, no one would outstrip him in running away, and it was absolutely essential to success that someone in the expedition should live to return and give an account of the serpent to an anxious world. Who could they depend upon, if not upon him the fastest runner.

He had still another reason to urge why he should be selected. It was to his ancestor Commodore Aulick to whom the King of the Hawaiian Islands presented the royal mantle which was worth a fabulous sum of money. This mantle was made of golden feathers, only two of which grew on each bird, one gold feather under each wing. It was now temporarily stored at the Smithsonian Institute, but he could procure it at any time, and he was the only person in the world entitled to wear such a garment. Unlike the cloak of the fairy tales, instead of making him invisible, it made him visible at long distances. Indeed he thought if he were allowed to join, wearing the mantle, it would be unnecessary to add any one else to the expedition. He would simply don the mantle, go to some quiet spot in the town, and the sea serpent perceiving the radiance from afar off would journey from his home to see the mantle, and he, Mr. Aulick would then be able to give to the Club and an awaiting world an account of his appearance. Thus all fatigue and expense would be saved.

The committee were profoundly impressed by the modesty of such a proposal. It seemed to them, however, that a man, who was so lazy that he expected success without an effort, really had little comprehension of the magnitude of the undertaking. Mr. Aulick was evidently much surprised at their hesitation and feared that he would be left at home unless he gave other reasons that might influence them. So he continued, if his eminent fitness did not impress them, he desired to appeal to their sympathies. He had as they knew, lately been married, and this fact itself was conclusive proof of his being courageous enough to undertake any expedition however hazardous. He desired, moreover, to give further proof of his powers by some even more daring act. He also intimated that it had occurred to him, if he should find that he could survive such an expedition as this, with all its hardships, such as unwholesome food, unmended clothes, uncared for rooms, unaired beds etc., that he should gain courage to feel that possibly he

would be able to endure with some degree of cheerfulness, the forty-nine years and eleven months, which would elapse before the golden wedding.

This last remark produced a profound sensation. This was the first marriage that had occurred between two members of the Club living at the time in Groton, and breaking in so auspiciously upon the usual routine of the Club, it stirred the slumbering embers of hope, if not of great expectancy, that it would be the initiative of a great revival of matrimonial interest. It was important therefore that this union should be a great success. Almost two-thirds of the Club were in the matrimonial market. To be sure it was rumored by the envious, that one or two belonged to the non-secret order of "P. U's" or permanently unmarried, but the greater number were of the class so touchingly described by Gov. Andrew as "anxious and aimless," and as to the male members of the Club, it was well known that cases exist where "Barkis is willing." Alas! if the dawn of so bright a day should be followed by an evening with clouds.

The appeal was successful. Matrimony must be defended. Without taking a vote it was tacitly understood that he would join the expedition.

Presently Mrs. Smythe appeared before the committee. She thought if searching for a sea serpent was anything like searching for a girl in an intelligence office, she was admirably adapted to the work. Her experiences had been varied and amusing. One girl when requested to remove some ashes from the stove on Sunday morning, asked if it was not the Sabbath day? and gave notice that she should leave the next morning. On Mrs. Smythe's return from church, she saw the clothes line in the yard hung with wet clothes belonging to the domestic, washed in preparation for her departure. But the girl seemed to bear no malice towards her on account of the extra Sunday work required, but told her she thought she was a real good woman, and if she could find anyone adapted to her wants, she would send them to her. Another girl when leaving wished to hear from her every week. In fact she thought she had made a favorable impression upon all the girls, some fifty in number whom she had employed during her four years of housekeeping. She could not think it more difficult to find the sea serpent, than it was a domestic to go into the country, and her great success in finding so many in so few

years, made her feel that she would be without a peer in the expedition. The committee could not understand the relevancy of her remarks, and so much time had been spent that it seemed best to hear all the applicants and decide upon the company later.

The next person that the committee heard was Morgiana. She said that she had an ideal in life and unlike most she had realized it. That many years ago she heard that Senator Evarts had said, "it was a grand thing to have had a career and he had had one." She too had had a career. She did not feel that the Club had been sufficiently mindful of the fact. She did not propose to sue for a place in this expedition she claimed it as a right. She had had large and varied experiences in life. She had more than once shaken hands with several thousand persons in a few hours. This fact alone showed her ability to cope with difficulties. She had had experiences in saloons, in schools and in reformatories, among black people and white. Had been well acquainted with princes, presidents and prisoners. Was the only woman in town who had held two commissions from the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and was probably the only person, man or woman who had taken the iron clad oath that she had not borne arms against the United States. All these things went to show how wonderfully capable she was. The committee listened to Morgiana as soberly as they could, but after she retired they seemed to agree with unanimity that she was wholly unfit for any such undertaking, and that she really was incapable of doing anything well. One of the members, more charitable than the others said that she had understood that Morgiana could play a good game of whist, but really that was the only thing that even her friends claimed that she could do at all well, and as the expedition was only to last five weeks, it did not seem as if there would be any use for whist players.

Finally came the General. It is as unnecessary to give any other name to him as it would be to give the christian name when we say Wellington or Grant. He was known the world over as the General. He said that he based his claim to be selected entirely upon his military prowess. To be sure as a passing remark, he might state that he had achieved distinction in almost every other walk in life. At one time he was a successful politician, having been a Senator in two states the same year, he had also been gifted with

great financial ability. He had, he might properly state, for the benefit of those who had not before heard, if it were possible that there were any such, that he was chiefly instrumental in establishing the order of Heliogabalus, which has spread over the civilized world, and which had been the means by which Stanley had made friends in darkest Africa. That he had pulled wool over the eyes of more foreigners than any other American, for proof of which statement he would refer to the report on sheep made at the Vienna Exposition. These exploits alone would confer distinction upon an ordinary person, but he was willing to waive all these minor successes and depend entirely upon his military record. He would like to state that his title of General came to him unsought. He even did not have to fight in order to secure it as was often times necessary when inferior men gained the title. He had never even owned a sword, never having had any use for one. He represented the military idea of the future, when the highest honors and titles would be given to those who were the most peaceful in their actions. He was willing to leave the matter entirely to the committee, feeling sure that their usual good sense would not desert them and that he should certainly be selected. The committee did not see what possible use the expedition could have for a military man who did not know how to fight. Oh! but we must have the General go with us, said the impulsive one, for if it should happen that we did not find the sea serpent after all, what could we do without him. He was never known to fail to do anything which the Club asked of him, and he is the only one that under such circumstances could be depended upon to write a history of the expedition, for his imagination is so vivid that he would be able to state just when and where we saw the serpent, so that no one in reading it would doubt the truthfulness of the report, and this faculty might be the means of saving the expedition from even a suspicion of failure.

By this time the committee had become wearied. One-fifth of the time allotted for the trip had passed, and the company was not even selected. But the most discouraging feature was the egotism manifested by the claimants. Strange too, for egotism even in a small degree, had never been noticed before in any member of the Club. One talkative young lady said that we should be glad that we possessed so much, for egotism was the great civilizer of

the world. With that quality left out of persons, we should have no martyrs and no reformers. Most of us thought the young lady must be cracked to believe such heresy. Thereupon the committee rose and dissolved the meeting.

CHAPTER II.

It was a quarter of seven exact, on Monday morning of the second week of the five which the Club were to devote to the discovery of the sea serpent, that the General sat down to his well-filled and well-ordered breakfast table. He exchanged the usual cheery morning salutation with his wife, and was just about to cut the steak, when with one look of admiration, and then consternation, he dropped his knife and fork, rushed into the hall with such speed that he upset his little daughter, who was coming in to breakfast and caused her to ask if papa had seen a mouse, siezed his hat and was gone. He flew down the street, rang the bell violently of a certain house where he well knew he could find a fellow-worker, was admitted and announced immediately that he had an idea. This idea, or inspiration I ought to call it, was that the Club should start on their expedition in a balloon. Not that he expected to find a sea serpent in the air—but, “up in a balloon” a general observation of the whole country could be obtained, and then the Club could perhaps ascertain by some sign, in which part of the world the serpent was most likely to be at that time of the year, and so could decide on further action. No more time ought to be wasted—they should start immediately.

The fellow-worker caught his inspiration at once, and agreed to see to the chartering of the balloon from Barnum, —to having it in town by the next morning already inflated, —to notifying all members of the Club,—in fact, to making all arrangements and carrying them out. He was well fitting for the work, and the General went home, sure his idea was safe, and he could finish his steak at leisure.

The fellow-worker was on the street all that day. The Club was large and the distance great to inform each member, and see that provisions were collected to support so large a company for even a few days. Then there were telegrams back and forth from Mr. Barnum, and many small things to be seen to,—too numerous to mention.

Nothing was forgotten, the fellow-worker had had many years of training in the Groton Grange and Farmer's Club, and all was well performed.

Tuesday morning dawned. It was a merry, excited crowd who gathered in the High school yard to await the arrival of the balloon, which was expected at nine o'clock. It had been sighted from the town many hours before, and had been watched with interest as it grew larger and larger, and now it was just overhead and her captain was making preparations to land. Down she came, grandly, slowly, swaying from side to side, ropes were thrown out and were eagerly seized by the boys stationed for that purpose, and carried quickly to the fastenings.

"All aboard," shouted her captain, and every member pressed forward. I say "every member" for the kind heart of the General could not bear to have anyone disappointed, so even those ruled out at the meeting as disqualified are among the crowd now. In fact, the military man of the club had insisted that *his* wife should go—*nay—must go* or *he* could not. No one else knew how to shine his brass buttons and that flaming sword which he wore at his side. Smiling and brilliant, Mrs. Smythe was on hand having with her a box of rotten stone and a bottle of oil, and throughout the entire journey, she kept those brass buttons so bright and shining that they were used as looking-glasses by day, and as lamps to the company by night. The Club would not have had the military man remain at home if no serpent were ever found. They might need that shining sword, and a man who could fight, and besides, no lady would willingly miss his gentle, polite gallantry,—for who was so quick to hold a *sacque* or do any little kindness as he? Lucile and Morgiana were there of course, Lucile carried a basket and when asked what it contained, she quickly replied, and with some spirit that anyone should even ask—"cats, I can't leave my dear kitty at home, and my friend Morgiana is *never* happy without hers. She would not come without it, and no serpent will ever be found without her help *I know*." Every one laughed that Lucile supposed Morgiana of so much value, but the cats were allowed to remain.

Meanwhile the balloon ropes had been cut and she was rising. She moved slowly, for she was very large and very heavily laden, but just here something very remarkable was noticed. The already distended bag was growing larger

and larger—and no one could see where any more gas was being introduced. A puzzled look was on every one's face—until the Australian traveller calmly said, "don't you all know the Groton Literary Club is on board?" The balloon was swollen now to its utmost limits, and away she shot into the air like a bird, and at once what scenes passed before them!

They sped across the continent and up and down the length and breadth of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans. Seals, sharks, porpoises and whales they saw, but no serpent. Passing over the various countries of the globe, a thousand things, new and strange, passed rapidly before their eyes. They saw the spotless glaciers of Iceland, they looked down the crater of Vesuvius, and barely escaped taking fire from the volumes of melting lava thrown into the air, they crossed the burning desert and saw the great pyramids and the sphinx, they saw darkest Africa with its pigmies, cannibals, hippopotami and endless forests. They saw the equator, which to their surprise, they found to be, not an imaginary line as they had been taught, but a high board fence with birds-of-paradise as pickets. They saw the south pole and the north pole—very large oak poles, and much to their delight, from their tops fluttered the star-spangled banner. At the north pole they were greatly excited with the anticipation of seeing the mid-night sun, but they suffered a great disappointment. Always energetic and busy, and besides being proud of those brass buttons, Mrs. Smythe had at last brought them to such a degree of polish, the poor sun was completely blotted out—paled before their brilliancy as the moon before the rising sun.

No serpent was seen. They sailed north, east, south, west, sometimes very near the water or land in order to search more carefully, sometimes very high in the air that they might get a good bird's-eye view of the whole—but all in vain. Once they went so near the moon that they hailed the gentleman there and asked if he knew anything of the whereabouts of the serpent at that time, but he maintained a dignified silence.

Every day they used their field glasses and telescopes to scan the horizon, but at night the military man was called upon to brandish his sword at certain intervals, and the light emitted from its smooth, shining blade was equal to the strongest electric light, was useless, they caught sight of no serpent.

All

But if no serpent were found—the tour of observation was of great value to every member in another way. The fellow-worker had acted as a sort of guide, and the amount of information he was able to give them was really wonderful. The Club knew well his remarkable knowledge of his native town, that he could tell the name of every stream and meadow, the height of every hill, and with all its history was well versed,—but now he proved himself equally well acquainted with all those facts wherever they travelled. The height of every mountain, the depth of every lake or sea, the name of every river, large or small, where it rose and where it emptied, the extent of every country and its history, were all at his tongue's end. Still more remarkable, his memory for data was so great, he not only knew the year when every King and Mogul took his royal seat, but he could tell when the several parts of the world emerged from chaos. This last he could not remember of course, but he knew by a sort of instinctive memory inherited from his ancestors of whom both he and his sister were justly proud. They obtained a great deal of very valuable information and saw all parts of the globe, but they sailed so fast their geography got very much mixed. Indeed it was never safe (after their return) to ask them many questions about their travels, for they were sure to speak of the Desert of Sahara as near the North Pole, or say they saw seals basking under the equatorial fence, or that they froze their ears when near Cuba, and suffered from the heat near Greenland, or something equally ridiculous.

Towards the end of the week the party began to be discouraged. Everywhere their search had been fruitless, and many thought it was best to land and discuss what course of action to adopt next.

CHAPTER III.

“Let us take one more ride up toward the region of the moon, before we wholly give up this method of spying out the sea serpent,” said the hopeful one of the party. “We must gaze into the sea with more faith.” “Nothing like having faith when you are looking for the sea serpent,” retorted Mrs. Aton, the oldest and wisest of the party. Little Mrs. Aton had kept so quiet they had hardly noticed

her, but now she was found sitting near that elderly gentleman, who in former days, in Groton, used to wear a long black cape and staunchly maintain that the world is growing worse and worse.

They had been having a lively discussion as to the wisdom of this great expedition; he, maintaining that they were just as likely to find the serpent in dear old Groton, in Martin's pond, as here nobody knew where.

Meanwhile they were nearing the moon and the party began to shiver with the cold. Some tried to persuade Mrs. Fair to let them have some of her four sacques, five shawls, three hoods or two pairs of mittens she had on. But she held her cane menacingly and said she had the rheumatism, *she* knew better than to come off without wraps as the young and foolish of the party had done.

But now the two professors, who labor in "The shooting gallery of the young idea," were discovered, not looking for the serpent, but arranging their telescopes for close observation of the moon. Their observations proved beyond a doubt that old Knickerbocker was right, and that the people of the moon carry their heads under their arms, instead of on their shoulders so awkwardly as we mortals do.

Even such interesting facts as that, however, did not disturb a party of hopefuls who were gazing intently into the blue depth below, in search of their friend the serpent. Suddenly there appeared great agitation among them and all attention was turned upon a long, partially coiled object in the sea far below. Intense excitement suddenly seized the party. "*The Serpent!*" shouted the General; "About face," roared the military man; while the Australian traveller threw up his hat and in his confusion shouted "Three cheers for — — — my small boy!" Meanwhile, in the din and confusion, Mrs. Aulick who had been napping, as was her wont at the gatherings of the Club, awakened and vowed that the object below *was* the sea serpent. Because she had seen a snake in the pond, she was sure she could recognize a serpent in the sea. But her reasons were not considered sufficient, so as is usual among Americans, as well as the Groton Literary, when anything is to be *done*, they appointed a committee to decide upon the object in the depths below. Instead of adjourning into a separate room, the committee all put their heads under a shawl, and after a few minutes rose to the surface with the recommendation that the excursion should descend upon said object.

So down came the Club, with all their weight of body and mind. But, alas! the nearer they came, the less a serpent was the object below. "Never mind let's land and have something to eat," suggested Bethel. "I feel just like a lobster salad, or an oyster stew," she added. "I am so cramped in this balloon, I feel more like a sandwich," exclaimed her sister. "Here you are," shouted the manager, and soon "the Literary" was out on what appeared a moist, green island, long and narrow. The geologist, our strong Tower, immediately tried digging up the soil. But it was hard work to break the crust, and when that was fairly done, while digging deeper, all the party felt a great earthquake.

This shock was so great, that Mrs. Smythe, who sat near the edge of the island polishing buttons, with Lucile's mother, who was sewing on flannel blankets, which she mercifully dropped down upon any heathen island, where full apparel was wanting, rolled off into the water. There was terrible excitement at that instant. The brave military man, who could not swim a foot, frantically waved his sword to his wife in the water, and cried "*Charge!*" The General shouted, "A hundred dollars for anyone who will save the lives of these lovely ladies." But his words were unnecessary, for the Australian traveller was already bringing the dripping ladies to the shore.

"Now we must make a good fire," said Mrs. Fair, "or these people will surely get the rheumatism, cold and wet as they are." But no fuel was to be found on the whole island; however, after much hunting, enough celluloid cuffs and collars and other such articles were collected, with which to make a good fire. All the party sat around these glowing articles, and tried to keep off the feelings of discouragement that came, as they thought of the grand and noble purpose for which the party had first planned the trip.

The feelings of the Club were deeply moved at the thought of what a total failure these first three weeks of serpent-seeking had been. Many a faithful member wept and melancholy seemed to be taking possession of the Club; when, "Let us suppose this *is* the sea serpent said Mr. Aulick, just to cheer up the gloom. Here is Mrs. Way actually weeping over our failure. If this island were the sea serpent, it would account for the apparent earthquake while trying to break the soil. Of course the

creature does not want his back delved into in any such fashion." At this remark, some of the ladies turned pale, but still he continued, "If it takes a whale seventy feet long, half a second to feel the harpoon in his tail, perhaps it might take two or three minutes for this long island (possibly serpent) to feel the bonfire on the back of his tail. What if this terra firma should swim off or like his majesty, the Dragon of Milton, 'swing the scaly horror of his folded tail.'" "Do you feel better after all these horrible conjectures," asked one. "You frighten the ladies with such talk; let us sing college songs instead," said the General. So all began to sing "There's a hole in the bottom of the sea," when fair Miss Emma screamed, "Ow!" Whereupon three others screamed, "Ow!"

But in an instant it was noticed that the island seemed to be sinking. The screams and shouts became general. "Unhitch the balloon," shouted one: "I can't swim, save me!" cried another; "O my buttons screamed," Mrs. Smythe; "My cat, my cat," cried Morgianna and Lucile in concert; "O that lobster salad," groaned Bethel, as she saw it disappear under the water. But the rest of the cries were lost; for all at once there was a tremendous upheaval of the lower portion of the island, and the whole Club was sent flying towards the sky, only to descend in a moment, not on the island, for that had disappeared; but into the arms of the briny deep.

"Gentle reader"—for it is hoped *are* gentle—in the next chapter you will learn how the scattered Literary was picked up out of the deep blue sea, and pursued their labors further.

CHAPTER IV.

An expedition of such importance was of course provided with all the appliances necessary to secure its success, so that among other articles, the balloon was furnished with an ample supply of life preservers. These life preservers helped by the natural buoyancy of disposition evinced by each member of the Club, were sufficient to keep every one afloat for an indefinite length of time. What happened to the Club, however, after the island disappeared from the surface of the water was of such an incredible nature that

we should fear ^{1/2} what the truthfulness of our narrative would be questioned were it not that we are fortunate in being able to quote from a journal written by the most reliable member of the Club and a participant in the scenes. The thanks of mankind are due for the great strength of mind which enabled this person to make a record when passing through such calamitous events. This paper struck off at white heat as it were, bears internal evidence of its truthfulness, I quote verbatim from the journal.

" We did not sink. As we were floating about, the manager thought he spied something in the distance. We all frantically waved our handkerchiefs, and we soon saw the object was making for us. It proved to be a steamer bound for Alaska. We were taken aboard and consigned to the engine-room to dry ourselves. As none of the Club had been to Alaska, we were glad of this opportunity to go. We might find the sea serpent there.

The captain of the steamer informed us that a number of his passengers were going to Alaska with the intention of climbing the celebrated Muir glacier. This fired the enthusiasm of our Sandwich Islander. Was he not able to shin up Mt. Tom, surely he could climb a glacier! Our Professor was glad he brought his double runner so we could all slide down. The steamer had come to a standstill while we were at lunch. A passenger on tiptoe looked through the port-hole and uttered an exclamation of amazement, then we all rushed to similar apertures, climbed on the chairs, looked over each others shoulders, in fact did all kinds of unreasonable things, and at last stampeded up the companion-way to the deck. The glacier was before us. All the rowboats were lowered and we were ferried over to the glacier, each armed with an alpenstock.

After a difficult climb we reached the top. The Professor suggested that we slide down on his double-runner. We started. Faster, faster we went, a mile a minute, when some distance ahead of us we saw what appeared to be a tunnel, but as we came nearer we discovered it to be the sea serpent with wide-open mouth waiting to receive us. But the Professor was equal to the occasion, he put on more steam and ran his double-runner directly through the creature.

When we returned to the steamer it was ten o'clock, not

by the light of the moon, but in one of those glorious sunsets which nearly always closes the day.

Next morning we debarked at Victoria. We of course, took lunch at the "Poodle Dog." At Port Townsend we rested for a few hours until the custom-house officials had satisfied themselves that we had not smuggled anything from British Columbia, and here I discovered the General and the military man rather unseasonably clad in fur overcoats, purchased in Victoria. They were evidently wearing them from a sense of *duty* to their government.

There had been more than one friendship commencing on the Alaskan trip, which had ripened into mutual pledges "for good or for bad, for better, for worse." One much-travelled Benedict, who was accustomed to congratulate himself that

"A bachelor
May thrive, by observation on a little,
A single life's no burden."

was the first to fall a victim to female charms, in furs and ulster resulting in

"A contract of eternal bond of love,
Confirmed by mutual joinder of their hands."

and happily there were no regrets.

The question arose whether the club should return to Groton or continue its wanderings. A running match was proposed, the winner to decide the matter."

The journal ends here and we have been unable to find any account of the foot race which we especially regret as it makes a break in our narrative. We think it must be noticeable to all who have perused this journal, the great mental strain to which the writer had been subjected which probably explains the abruptness of the conclusion.

CHAPTER V.

Prior to the remarkable event recorded in the preceding chapter it had been the rule of the Club, on its great expedition in quest of the sea serpent, to submit for final decision all questions as to plans and methods of procedure, to the head and not to the legs of the party. This change in the *morale* of the Club, resorting to the ordeal of a

foot-race in a great emergency which required the most serious deliberation, was alarming.

The long, severe and hitherto unrelaxed mental strain was having its inevitable effect of discouragement and weakening nerve, and threatened to bring an enterprise to which the eyes of all the world were turned, to an untimely and inglorious end.

The Surgeon, who was familiarly known to the Club as our Doctor of Divinity, was thoroughly convinced that the whole party had suffered a certain cerebral disturbance from the great shock they received when the double-runner, descending from the glacier with lightning speed, struck the mouth of the monster. There must have been a concussion of the brain of no slight degree, and a temporary aberration of mind would necessarily follow such a physical shock, intensified by the great and sudden fright they must have experienced, when they saw themselves darting into the awful jaws of the monster, and already felt, in imagination, his great teeth closing upon them, and piercing them through, as if dashed upon the iron spikes of an inverted harrow.

This opinion of the Surgeon was more than verified, when at his suggestion the roll was called of all the members of the expedition, that each one might be heard from as to the propriety of abandoning the search at the present stage of affairs, and it was discovered, to the equal amazement and consternation of the Club, that several members of the party were missing, and that no attention had been paid to their absence—and indifference that could be explained only by the fact afore alluded to—the great physical and mental exhaustion, consequent to such immense labors as the expedition had performed, and its ceaseless virgils for the appearance of the serpent.

The discovery acted like a tonic. Probably these missing comrades had been dragged from the double-runner on its passage through the awful creature; perhaps they were now hanging, mangled and bleeding, on its sharp teeth as on the ragged edge of a precipice, or they were wandering like perturbed shades in Hades, within the cavernous mouth of the monster.

Among the missing were Lucile and her cats, the sweet singer and the handsomest young lady of the party, who had been a joy to every one from the very outset of the expedition.

Of course to abandon the enterprise now and leave their companions to their awful fate, was not to be thought of even by those who were most anxious to give up the search and return home.

Something must be done for their rescue; if alive and in danger, it were as cruel as cowardly to return and make no effort to ascertain what had become of them.

Now the spirit of the expedition rose to the highest pitch. Volunteers came forward, one and another urged upon the General and his colleague their services, and some even fell upon their knees and implored to be allowed to go back, to swim, to fly, to survive or perish to do something in behalf of the lost ones.

Preparations were at once begun for sending out a search and relief party. The work was pushed on rapidly, and in less than forty-eight hours everything was ready even to a diving bell of the most approved pattern, and several aquatic suits for submarine exploration. Nothing was omitted which the ingenuity of man could suggest as necessary to the success of the great and solemn task they were taking in hand, and special attention was given to stocking a large medicine chest and to providing an abundance of lint bandages, etc.

The next day was cloudless, and before the sun was an hour high, a large whaleboat, loaded to the gunwales and propelled by ten amazon rowers might be seen flying like a seabird over the gently undulating waters, and just disappearing in the blue distance.

Now they are gone! every flashing blade faded out of sight like vanished stars.

About high noon, when in the phrase of the mystic art the world is called from labor to refreshment, a great calm fell upon the sea, and the tired rowers, yet denying that they were weary in the enthusiasm of the hour, were resting on their oars.

No one had spoken for several minutes. All was silence, —silence, deep and awful as the wide, mysterious sea on which they were floating. "Hark," whispered Miss Bethel, "hark, methinks I hear a strange, plaintive sound, such as oft in the still night, at the weird midnight hour, falls upon the wakeful ear."

"Snoring, by George," quietly remarked the Australian traveller. "For shame," replied the injured maiden. "But listen, perchance it will come again." And again it was as

still as death, save as now and then a ripple lapped the side of the boat, giving even a profounder stillness to the solemn hour.

"Look! Look! What's that, what's that?" exclaimed a voice from the bow of the boat, and at the same time the speaker rose to her feet, and pointed with long graceful finger far out upon the water. Immediately all eyes are turned in the direction of that out-stretched hand. Can it be possible that at this great distance from the shore that slight disturbance of the sea can be a gentle wave breaking over a sunken rock?

"Hark." Every ear is intent. There can be no doubt about it, there are two glaring eyes moving directly towards them! There are four eyes, as if in the head of one creature.

On they come, hastening their speed, and in a moment more (in the dreadful apprehension that seized the beholders, it seems an eternity), a distinct murmur rose and swelled, and then died away in a smothered sob.

The rowers spring to their seats, more and more rapid the oars strike the water; the swift keel seems scarcely to touch the surface of the sea; and in a few minutes more Lucile's two cats, faint, wet, almost exhausted, are lifted from the all-devouring ocean and pressed with almost frantic delight to Morgianna's breast. O! to be a cat and receive such caresses!

At once, what joy! No pen can describe it. Out into the silent air rolled in one grand chorus that majestic outburst of the ancient philosopher, Eureka! Eureka!

It is said that they fell on each others necks and wept aloud—for thus happiness at its flood bursts the sluice-gates of the heart and like sorrow finds vent in rivers of tears.

The finding of the dear, half-dead pussies, was like the floating seaweed which to Columbus betokened the nearness of land.

For a time it escaped the eyes of the party dim with tears, that, passing round the body of each cat, was a very fine thread, and that it ran out into the water at great length. Hand over hand they pulled these threads in, until they seemed to have no end. But, finally, they resisted the combined strength of the whole crew, and it became evident that they were attached to some very heavy object at the bottom of the sea.

Orders were given to man the windlass, handspike after

handspike of toughest oak was broken, but in vain. They could not start the weight. A derrick was constructed, but even with this powerful appliance the resistance was not overcome. Where they trying to pull up the bottom of the ocean?

Careful examination revealed the fact that these small threads of such marvellous strength were of animal tissue, and it was suggested that possibly they were torn or unwound from some nerve ganglion of the serpent by the claws of the cats, in their frantic efforts to escape—as yarn is unravelled from a knit stocking—and doubtless were still attached to the creature, killed or severely wounded by the shot of the double-runner.

Twice in their fruitless attempts to raise the resisting object, the boat was almost capsized, and Mrs. DeYon, Mrs. Day and Mrs. Fair were precipitated with all their colors flying head-foremost into the briny deep; they would certainly have been drowned, but that, like all giddy and frivolous women, they were lighter than vanity, and could *not* sink.

Night was approaching and it was more and more evident that but one resource remained—the diving bell.

But who of them all was ready to brave the perils of the experiment? to be shut up in an iron coffin, as it were, and be let down to an unknown depth into an unknown sea. It required the sublimest reach of courage, it called for a moral heroism of which few are capable—an incredible amount of nerve. What a spirit of devotion unto death to consent, nay to ask, for duty's and humanity's sake, perhaps to be literally buried alive in the depths of the sea!

The capacity of the bell was insufficient for any considerable number, and the hazardous experiment was less likely to fail if no more than four or even two descended in it.

Who shall be these two heroic souls? Exclaiming like the noble Cæsar, "The die is cast, the Rubicon is past." Mr. Aulick rose to his full height, and casting one short, yet eternal soulful look upon the face of his beloved, at once began to make preparations for the awful journey. "For better or for worse," she was heard to whisper, and immediately fell on her knees, and began—to put on her rubbers. Then with all the calmness of one who

"Wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

she buttoned on her waterproof, and she too, noble, heroic woman, was ready. O, call not such a wife as that the "better-half," she is more; she is a whole one and a half.

The bell is swung over the water. They enter it. Now it begins to sink, slowly, slowly. Just then a cloud flits across the sky, a sea gull flies near and calls and flaps its wings.

"Facilis descendus Averni" breathes Mrs. Aulick as she tightens her hold on the strong arm of her support, and he in the liquid tones of his native isle, responded "La la le le mo mi," which means, being interpreted, "just so, duckie, dear." These were their last words, as the sea received them, and they dropped out of sight.

Signals were to be made by striking the sides of the bell with a hammer. One blow, "more air," two blows, "stand by," three blows, "heave up."

An hour of intensest anxiety went by, and no signal, the second is near its close, and a sharp sound, thrice repeated, breaks the dreadful silence.

The entire boat's crew rush to the ropes and presently the bell with its living contents emerges from its watery bed.

* * * * *

In the vocabulary of youth and love, there is no such word as "fail."

Yes, they had found the monster, not dead, but alive, yet apparently unable to move. The wound made by the double-runner and the Professor's outstretched legs, in the effort to steer past the awful chasm, had undoubtedly paralyzed the motor nerves of the beast, and the great Leviathan of the deep, hoisted by his own petard, now lay harmless at the feet of his captors.

And what was more; it was ascertained, that the missing members of the expedition were still alive, imprisoned as some had suspected within the oral cavity of the awful snake, and in great extremity.

At once every member of the party was eager to don the sub-marine suits, dive to the bottom of the sea and engage in the work of rescue.

Furthermore, the mysterious threads had told their secret; they were fastened to the serpent's teeth and furnished a perfect clue to the immense labyrinth of its mouth.

Drawn taut it was but the work of an hour to construct what is known at all life-saving stations along our coast, as a cradle, by which these "poor spirits in prison" could with ease and safety be brought to the boat, as shipwrecked sailors to the land.

By a lever of peculiar construction, the huge jaws of the serpent were pried open, and after almost incredible feats of courage, strength and endurance on the part of the rescuers—like scaling the sheer perpendicular side of some fearful precipice, and going down into the fiery crater of a half extinct volcano,—the hour of deliverance came.

Every one of them was saved, and after liberal potations, under the Surgeon's eye, of the cups that cheer but not inebriate, within an hour they had quite forgotten all their untold sufferings, and were merrily singing

We wont go home till morning,
We wont go home till morning,
Till daylight doth appear.

"Untold sufferings! No, gent'e reader, they never can be told, either how endured or how overcome.

The recital would harrow up your soul, and make each particular hair stand on end like the quills of the fretted porcupine. Let it suffice to say that probably no expedition since the world began—certainly none since the Argonauts went in search of the Golden Fleece, was ever so thoroughly equiped, or had within itself such boundless resources of scientific wisdom, creative genius and mechanical skill. No tool, implement, engine, machine, can be mentioned, which the Groton Literary Club could not evolve out of its inner consciousness with as much ease as a spider spins its web out of its own body.

And especially was this true on this great expedition in quest of the great and mysterious sea serpent.

But to go on with the narrative—what became of the sea serpent, left wounded and perhaps dying?

By injecting just under the skin, several barrels of pure compressed oxygen having a very wonderful bouyancy, or lifting power, which was done by a double acting squirt gun, the great creature was, after a time, fairly inflated like a balloon, and at first rising slowly, finally bobbed to the surface like a cork, and lay there a huge bulk, rolling from side to side in the trough of the sea.

* * * * *

"The iron fongue of midnight hath told twelve."

This original remark from the Australian traveller, looking at his watch, fixes the great hour when the relief party, its work nobly and successfully done, its mission more than accomplished, started on its return. Not far in the rear followed the serpent in tow, held fast by additional ropes, like a captive in chains.

The Aurora Borealis was sending great streams of golden light up to the Zenith and spreading them far abroad; the late moon rose and strewed the rippling waters with myriads of silver spangles; the military man standing on the poop of the boat held aloft his shining blade, and as he turned it from side to side, great flashes of light leaped from the East to the West, from the sea to the sky; the rowers, with lusty sinew, dipped their oars in rythm with a well known boatman's song, and, thus, singing: "Row, brothers, row,"—with strains of martial music—the shrill fife and the spirit-stirring drum—they shoot like a meteor over the dancing waves, and just as

"Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops,"

reach the welcome shore in a blaze of glory!

The huge beast—his curious erectile scales of richest metallic lustre reflecting all the colors of the most brilliant gems; his great crest, extending from the middle of his back to his head, rising above the water like a row of graceful palm trees—rides at anchor a mile or two from the shore, life extinct!

* * * * *

The next day all the telegraph wires throbbed and quivered with the news. "The great sea serpent captured at last!" It flew as on the wings of the wind across the continent, and from city to city, and before the club was itself thoroughly awake to the magnitude of the work it had accomplished, the contribution it had made to science, and the immense benefit it had conferred upon the world, or, in its characteristic modesty, had thought of the honor it had achieved, bells were ringing from every church steeple, cannons were booming from every fort and fortress, and upon every hill great banners of flame from innumerable bonfires were waving in the wind. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, day after day continued and increased the rejoicing. Would it ever cease?

The homeward journey of the expedition was one continual and grand ovation. The General actually lost his voice and declined to make a speech—a thing unheard of before.

When they reached the city of Ayer the concourse of people was immense. The demand that a procession be formed could not be resisted. An escort was tendered and accepted, and as the Club drew near its native village it was especially touching to see, that as a most remarkable recognition of its great services, the American flag presented to the Butler school, and preserved in a secret closet in the building, guarded by a triple-winged dragon, had actually been brought out of its hiding place, and allowed to feel the touch of the common air, and unfold its beauty on the daily breeze.

A more extraordinary circumstance could not have marked the return of the expedition.

As the head of the column, moving on like an army with banners, came in front of the Town Hall, which was a perfect bower of roses, the celebrated Groton Brass Band with mighty roll of drum and blare of trumpets, struck up "Hail to the Chief,"—overpowered only by the acclamation of the assembled multitude, which rent the air, and reverberated from hill to hill.

Then, as if a great and sudden solemnity had fallen upon the people—in a profound stillness that might have been felt, forty-four beautiful girls, in white attire and having garlands in their hands representing the several states of the Union, stepped forward, and having each one of them crowned the General and his fellow worker, sang with marvellous sweetness an original ode, and again and again joined in the chorus, like the roar of many waters, the voices of the whole vast throng.

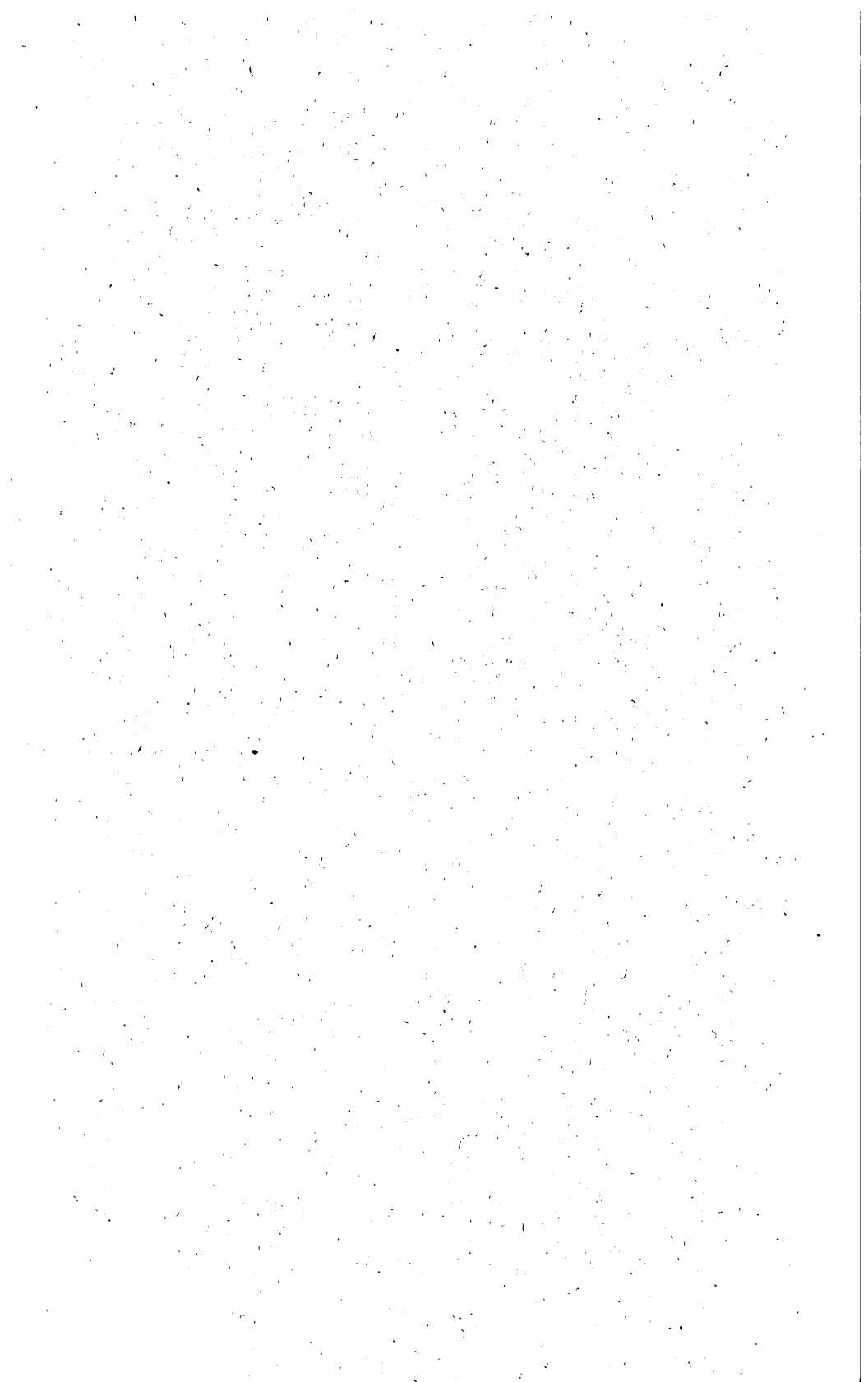
"Dear land of the free, and home of the brave;
Thy honor to cherish, thy glory to save;
Great perils encountered, huge labors and toils,
Yet not a life lost; our hands full of spoils,
With victory high! now bring we to thee,—
His capture achieved—the great SNAKE OF THE SEA."

FINIS.

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